Mechanical Memories Magazine

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The only UK magazine dedicated to vintage coin-operated amusements

Mechanical Memories Magazine

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Editorial

Hello, and here we are with the last magazine in 2010. Have you got over the auction yet? I have, just about, but it took a few days to unwind. More on the auction on page 14, but I should just say here what a pleasant surprise it was to see Maurice and Pat Felce, who came over for the auction all the way from Cyprus (I bet the temperature was a shock)! Anyway, it was really good to see you both.

And finally, just a reminder that the next magazine will be a 'special issue' featuring Stuart Dale's research into the life of Oliver Whales. You won't to miss this, so if your subscription is due for renewal, do it now!

Well that's just about it for now. Sharron and I wish you all a merry Christmas and a very happy and prosperous New Year

All the best for 2011

Jerry

News and Coming Events

Bonhams Knowle Sale

A number of interesting machines were included in Bonhams sale on 7th December, selling, it appears, for very reasonable prices; some may even say cheap. The Bryans Retreeva sold for £2100 inclusive of buyers' premium and the Payramid sold for £1440, again inclusive of premium. Probably about the right money, in both cases. However, given Bonhams commission rate is 20%, the hammer price on both these lots would have been pretty low. No doubt those bidding were doing so with the extra 20% in mind, or perhaps few actually turned up due to the weather?

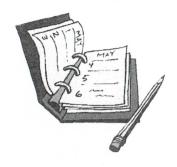
Perhaps the most interesting lot was number 177, a football theme catcher, which sold for £1500 inc. premium. A similar machine, but with a cigarette payout, is pictured on page 67 in Carters book. John Carter suggests that it is a conversion from a conventional Clown catcher, although I disagree; I'm pretty sure this is the way they were built. Anyway, a nice machine that I'd quite like to own myself.

I would have liked to have attended this sale, but I had an even more important prior engagement. Sharron and I went **Down Down** to Brighton – not to open up the arcade, I didn't even take the keys with me. We went to the Brighton Centre to see the greatest commercial rock band of all time. Just for a few hours, I completely forgot about slot machines!

Carters at Winter Wonderland

Some of the rides and shows from Carters Steam Fair are among the many attractions at the Winter Wonderland, in London's Hyde Park. If you are visiting central London with kids or Grand kids, this could be a great day out for the family. Other attractions include: London's biggest open-air skating rink; Zippos Circus; a giant 175 ft. observation wheel; arts and crafts market with over one hundred stalls, selling goods from around the world. Plus, complimenting Carters traditional amusements, there are many white-knuckle rides for the more adventurous. Winter Wonderland is open daily throughout December. For more info., go to:

www.hydeparkwinterwonderland.com



Dates for your diary

Winter Wonderland daily till 4th January Hyde Park, London

2011

Brighton Jukebox Show 2nd & 3rd April Brighton racecourse

Bonhams Mechanical Music & Scientific Instruments Sale 17th May Knowle

Jukebox Madness 22nd & 23rd October Kempton Park racecourse

MMM Vintage Slot Collectors' Show & Auction 27th November Provisional – date and venue to be confirmed

Bonhams Mechanical Music & Scientific Instruments Sale 29th November Knowle

Don't forget – if you know of any event which would be of interest to readers of the magazine, please let me know so that I can include details on this page.

Dreamland

Save Dreamland Update December 2010

I am writing this article just days before Thanet District Council formally decides to commence compulsory purchase action to ensure that the Dreamland site is available for the heritage amusement park project. All parties still hope that the site will be transferred voluntarily, but this is being used as a fallback because it is essential that work starts soon to enable the grant funding we have won to be spent.

We are also currently in the process of deciding which rides to restore for Phase 1, as money is tight and £1m of our funding has already been postponed to a future year due to Council cuts.

We are delighted, once again, to be working with the Princes Regeneration Trust. The PRT played a major part in helping us secure early funding to develop the project. They are now engaged with producing the Conservation Plan to support the second round Heritage Lottery funding bid.

There has also been yet another new discovery on the site. Recent visits to the Dreamland site have uncovered what appears to be part of the original railway building structure built in the 1860s. This significant find provides the site with yet another heritage asset alongside the Scenic Railway, the cinema building and Sanger's animal cages set into the gothic wall. More detail will emerge as the PRT continue with their investigations and assessments.

On 26th October we held a Dreamland Memories family day, which brought out some interesting characters along with some delightful artwork from the children taking part. Their innovative ideas would certainly provide a challenge for the design team! Les Logan came along with a photograph of himself and a colleague. The pair were snapped standing on an iron girder way up by the cinema fins. Les told us that he worked at Dreamland from 1954 right up until the Bembom Brothers took over in the 1980s. It was his responsibility to replace the neon lighting on the cinema façade. He clearly had a head for heights because when the big wheel got stuck in mid-cycle, he was tasked with the job of climbing to the top of the wheel to release it. No harness or safety net required - health and safety hadn't been invented back then!

We're always keen to hear your stories, so do please keep sending them in to jan@dreamlandmargate.com.

Our project website will be up and running before Christmas. It can be accessed using the original www.dreamlandmargate.com address. Our grateful thanks go to all those who have assisted, in particular writer Iain Aitch for his contribution, and our Board member, Sarah Vickery, for her tireless proof reading.

The new website has the usual information about the project and those involved. A new addition is the Dreamland timeline, featuring a snap shot of each decade, from the 1920s to the present day. This journey through time gives us a real sense of scale and the important part Dreamland played in our seaside and amusement park heritage. Information about Dreamland's collection of rides remains on the new site along with an overview of each ride, its status and historical significance. Working with our Creative Consultants, Designmap, we have created a website, which reflects the look and feel of what we are aiming for in the new Dreamland amusement park.

Our programme of events and activities for next year is also being planned. We anticipate the return of Carter's Steam Fair in May. John Lawson's Circus is also on the cards with some other exciting events taking place during their visit.

Nick Laister

Chairman, The Dreamland Trust

Jan Leandro, Audience Development Officer, The Dreamland Trust

www.dreamlandmargate.com www.savedreamland.co.uk

NEW RELEASE:

Disneyland 1970-1979 DVD

The long awaited Disneyland era saga continues with a look inside the Magic Kingdom within the groovy seventies. Many changes occurred; shops were closed down, attractions were updated, omitted and added and a new land of toe tapping, hip swinging bears moved into their own land entitled, Bear County. Now you can relive the magical changes that highlighted Walt Disney's Disneyland in the seventies. See how the Carousel of Progress was replaced by a tribute to America's popular music in America Sings, witness the change of Flight to the Moon to Mission to Mars and relive the excitement of the first thrill ride to enter Disneyland, Big Thunder Mountain. See original footage of the 1972 Main Street Electrical Parade, Harold the Abominable Snowman haunting guest within the icy caverns of the Matterhorn Bobsled, and the first thrill ride to reside in Disneyland. Big Thunder Mountain.

This is a great DVD that really captures the essence of Disneyland in the Seventies.

BONUS FEATURE of Matt S. animated wonder of Tomorrowland's Space Mountain.

Release Date: November 2010

Classification: Exempt from classification

Region coding: Not region coded

Running Time: NA Label: Theme Parkology

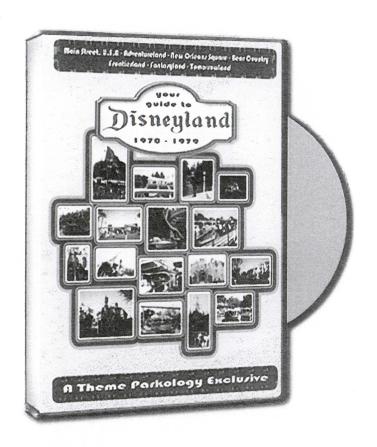
> RRP: £19.99 Our Price: £14.99

Also available
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Disneyland 1960-1969 DVD £14.99

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Paint

By John Peterson

Every Picture Tells a Story is a recent coin-op book by noted American collector Bill Howard. It's a beautiful volume, worthy of addition to your collection if you don't already own it. The title speaks to a device that Bill uses in his book. With the description of each machine is a brief story either about how he came to acquire it or some interesting fact about the history of the item, or both. Today's article is a takeoff on Bill's title. I've titled it 'PAINT' but it might well have been titled 'The Picture's the Story.'

American coin-operated games fall into fairly precise categories. We have slots, trade stimulators, vendors and the all-purpose 'arcade' category. There are pieces that fit into more than one category like the Ciga-Rola slot machine by O.D. Jennings, but for the most part, the American machines serve a single purpose. When you look at a slot machine, there is little question as to the purpose of the game. As a result, the game itself rarely was subjected to alteration. It's true that slot manufacturers occasionally 'updated' their older games to create excitement with a newer looking machine but it rarely went beyond putting the older mechanism into a more modern revamped case.

For a variety of reasons, British coin games are a little more elastic in their categories. Due primarily to their stricter anti-gambling laws, many machines portray themselves as one function (like vending) while serving a secret purpose: gambling! This should come as no surprise to those of you who are knowledgeable about the history of gambling and the constant tension between those who create/operate the games, and those who seek to regulate them. It's a veritable cat and mouse game. A good example of this dual purpose would be the allwins that dispense candy bars or cigarettes for a winning shot. The game avoids the gambling prohibition partly because some skill is involved and it can be argued that you are merely 'purchasing' an opportunity to win the item offered. Still, it's essentially a gambling machine. To reinforce the point, there are allwins that have a selector that allow the player to choose between either a penny or a cigarette as the prize.

Another significant difference between the British and American markets is venue. American machines were normally sited in permanent locations, (saloons, drug stores, groceries, clubhouses and the like) while our British cousins endured a more nomadic existence. Some were placed on piers and other arcade-like structures but many enjoyed a life at fairs and travelling shows. These gypsy games are the ones that I wish to illuminate for you today.

If you're a British coin machine operator on a limited budget and you find that your allwins are not pulling in the pennies like they used to, what can you do?

The short answer: pull out the old paint can and freshen up the games a bit. I cannot imagine an American operator attempting to 'brighten up' a Mills or Caille slot machine by painting it but that's just what some of our English friends did with some of their games on a regular basis.

The first example, **Photo A**, is a picture of three games sporting what is referred to as 'Showman's paint.' These three games are unrelated to one another and were probably never operated by the same individual. Yet, the similarity of the stylistic painting on the cases is striking. I have other games in Showman's paint and they look like these three. I find it impossible to believe that the same person painted all these different games. This leaves me with the assumption that this style of painting was both popular and common during the heyday of travelling fairs from the 20s through the 60s. I find case painting compelling and attractive. If you have one of these games, for heaven's sake, do not strip and refinish the piece! You have original artwork before you! The three games are, from left to right: Bajazzo or clown catcher, probably German by Jentsch & Meerz; Hod Clod, maker unknown and Bomb Dropper by Handan-Ni, London.



Photo A, Bajazzo, Hod Clod and Bomb Dropper.

The second style of paint, **Photo B** is where the backflash of the game has been painted. These are three sweets dispensing allwins that have been rather crudely hand-painted. Originally, these machines would have had commercially produced backflashes like the one you see in **Photo C**. Why deface a perfectly good backflash? I would guess that either the operator wanted to dispense a cheaper candy or the backflash itself became cracked and unattractive. It's significant to note that, to my knowledge, only the allwins offering sweets were altered in this manner. Maybe because winning candy is more fun and therefore acceptable to muck up the artwork? There is no manufacturing identification on these machines but I would guess them all to be Oliver Whales or Ruffler and Walker.

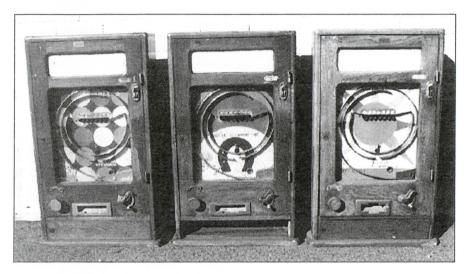


Photo B, three sweet payout allwins, probably Oliver Whales.

The final example, **Photo D** (pictured on front cover, **Ed**.) was originally a 'Win an Aero Choc' game by Oliver Whales of Red Car. What you see more clearly in **Photo E** is nothing less than naïve art at its finest. (If this were a giant Hallmark card, the theme from 'Titanic' would be swelling in your ears at this very moment). Someone with more time than talent spent hours painting this ship for future generations to enjoy. A fairly common commercial game from the early 1950s has been transformed from a vending machine into an amazing canvas for an untutored admiration of travel and adventure on the high seas. I try hard not to have favourites among my games but this particular machine makes me smile every time I see it

John Peterson, USA



Photo C, Ruffler & Walker Win a Polo Mint.

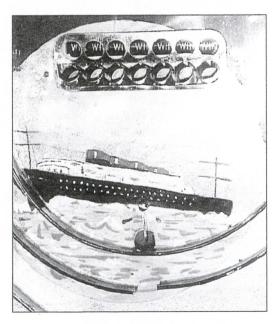


Photo E, backflash on John's Win an Aero.

Coventry 2010

Well another one over, and boy was it a close shave with the weather! As I scraped the ice off my van at 5.30 that morning, I have to admit that I was a little nervous that some of the vendors would not be able to make it due to snow in some parts of the country. As it turned out, only one vendor was snowed in, plus there was one other who had to pull out (which I already knew about). So in total, we were only short of eight lots. However, had the auction been just a few days later, I doubt whether anyone would have turned up. I certainly wouldn't have made it; we were snowed-in here for a week!

Attendance was down a little on previous years, but overall I think most of the usual crowd made it, and it was good to see a few new faces too. As always, there was a good social atmosphere during the viewing time; it's always good to catch up with friends that we haven't seen since this time last year! I just wish I had more time to chat at our events, but the time seems to go so quickly and I don't even get the chance to view the machines properly.



Some of the wall machines on offer. Picture courtesy Stuart Dale.

We had a good selection of machines on offer, although not so many bandits this time. All of the bandits sold, the star lot being a Rol-a-Top in need of restoration but mechanically sound, which went to a very good new home. On the whole, bandits sold for about the right money, but I can't help feeling that prices haven't really advanced much in all the time I've been collecting.

The same cannot be said of wall machines though. Values seem to be increasing yearly, and there were several surprises this time, just as there were last year. Indeed, the second machine lot in the sale, a nice but not perfect Hoopers machine, sold for four times its reserve! Unfortunately, it was one of the machines I had my eyes on, but I had to drop out of the bidding as it was clearly going to sell for much more than I was prepared to pay. Allwins in general made good money, again there were a couple I would have liked, but sold for more than I wanted to pay. On the subject of allwins, this must be the first year we haven't had an Elevenses on offer. Where have they gone? Having said that, I bet we get half a dozen next year!

And talking of Bryans machines, we didn't have so many entered this time, just five including two Clocks (it would have been six had the Pilwin turned up). The star Bryans machine, a rare Tick Tock, unfortunately didn't sell, but the Worlborl made a respectable £950. The Bullion also sold for fairly good money, given it was on new penny play.

Books, coins and miscellaneous lots all sold quite well, and some fairground artwork and gag cards sold for very good money. There were a couple of rare books I had intended bidding on, but unfortunately I missed them – my fault for standing outside smoking and talking to Maurice!

So, another year done, and another success. Thanks for all your letters, emails and 'phone calls - everyone, it seems, had a good time. Jeremy and I were very pleased with the day, and the fact that these events are so well received makes all the hard work worthwhile. Thanks to all our helpers, Kevin and Stuart; Dave Hooper (who I'm sure only comes to our events so he can lift machines in the air); Sharron and particularly Doff for minding the laptop for eight hours. Thanks also to our auctioneers Kevin and Steve, who once again did sterling work, ensuring most of the lots sold. But above all, thanks to everyone who came and made it yet another day to remember, particularly those of you who braved the elements, driving long distances. I know it was difficult for some, particularly John up in Scotland, but once again, you made YOUR day the success that it was.

The weather could have seriously buggered us this time.....but it didn't!

See you all next year

Jerry

Here are some of the prices realised in the auction. A full list (with pictures) is posted in the ARENA on the pennymachines website.

Lot	Description	Price
24	Novamat one-armed bandit wall machine.	200
25	Disco Flip wall machine, in art deco case.	630
27	Lucky 12 allwin, working on old penny play.	360
29	Ruffler & Walker Fill 'em Up allwin, with key.	500
34	French 'Electric' Allwin de Lux.	650
35	Oliver Whales 'Wot All Winners' Chad allwin.	480
36	3 Fairground signs, It's Fast, It's Thrilling, It's Exciting.	80
39	Fairground sign, 4 Darts for 3d.	50
41	3 Fairground signs from a skid.	90
45	Super Challenger, on old penny play.	180
47	Oliver Whales Kiss-O-Meter, on 1d play.	400
48	'What the Stars Foretell' oak cased fortune teller, on 1d play.	200
49	Bingola electro-mechanical wall machine.	250
50	Allwin wall machine, on old penny play.	380
51	ABT Challenger table-top ball bearing shooting game.	310
53	American trade stimulator for restoration.	140
71	Jennings Club Chief one-armed bandit, on 6d play.	920
73	Tura Bell, 1930s German one-armed bandit.	350
74	Stars of the Silver Screen, single reel bandit on 1d play.	340
75	Jubilee Riviera one-armed bandit, on 10p play.	200
76	Bally one-armed bandit, on 2p play.	90
78	Mills Apex one-armed bandit, on half penny play. No back door.	180
83	Fill 'em Up wall machine, on 3d play.	350
85	Rare 24 cup sweet payout allwin by Kraft automatics.	500
86	Parkers Carousel allwin, in good working order, on old penny play.	
88	Beromat German wall machine, brown painted case.	160
113	Primus, German wall machine, on old penny play.	160
115	Groetchen trade stimulator, working on 1d play, with key.	200
116	Rare Stevenson & Lovett Fireworks allwin, on 1d play.	860
117	Circle Skill wall machine, 'Juggla'.	480
118	Win a Chew allwin, on old penny play.	360
120	YZ bubble gum machine, with key. On old penny play.	32
121	Wonders 'Wonder Pools' allwin, in excellent working order.	580
122	Rialto, electro-mechanical bingo allwin.	160
123	Jameisons See-Saw, in very nice condition, on 1p play.	260
126	Push-Off pusher, in good condition, on 5p play.	110
127	Oliver Whales Win a Gift allwin, on old penny play.	380
128	BMCo Re-play allwin, in lovely condition, on old penny play.	630

129	Moulin Rouge, interesting roulette machine.	100
132	Lucky Bells, 1960s wall machine by Goldings of Essex.	140
135	Bell Fruit Cascade, complete with all trips. Good working order.	180
137	Ice Hockey table by JP Seeburg Corp., Chicago.	220
143	The Complete Pinball book.	28
158	500 3d coins.	20
159	250 Shillings.	20
161	Win a Mint allwin.	250
162	9 Cup allwin.	220
163	Treasure Cave coin pusher.	280
164	Mini Push coin pusher.	230
166	Change machine.	50
167	Sega bandit mech., all complete.	90
168	New unused 1960s Challenger in oak cabinet.	80
169	Parkers Carousel allwin, on old penny play.	440
170	Bryans Bullion, in good working order, on 1p play.	340
171	Bryans 12 Win Clock, nicely restored and re-chromed.	440
172	Punch & Judy coin kicker machine, on 2p play.	140
173	Diana, mega rare shooter wall machine, 1956.	560
179	Clown allwin, by Nostalgic Machines.	200
180	Ruffler & Walker Hat Trick allwin on 1d play.	540
181	Moulin Rouge German wall machine.	100
183	Oliver Whales Win a Smarties allwin.	410
184	Bryans Worlborl, oak cased two player wall machine.	950
195	Jennings Governor one-armed bandit, on 5p play.	250
196	Mills Hi-Top one-armed bandit, on 6d play.	270
197	Mills Hi-Top one-armed bandit, on 6d play.	300
198	Mini Sega, on 6d play.	150
199	Mini Sega, on 6d play.	160
200	1935 Watling Rol-a-Top, on 10c play.	1950
201	Jennings Governor one-armed bandit, with jackpot, on 1p play.	550
202	Jubilee Riviera Penny Spin one-armed bandit,	130
207	Shooting machine, unrestored but working.	250
208	R&W hockey table, in good working order.	280
209	Exhibit Supply Co. Hi-Ball, working on old penny play.	200
222	Allwin sweet type cabinet.	100
223	3 allwin doors.	110
225	R&W Win a Nestles front door and mech. only.	110
226	Oliver Whales Win a Choc. door only.	60
227	500 old pennies.	25
228	500 old pennies.	24
229	500 old pennies.	24
230	500 old pennies.	24

Made in Germany

By Robert Rowland

Back in the 1960s, I never realised that most seaside amusement arcades had slot machines on their walls that were manufactured in Germany. I do remember seeing and playing on a Bingolett, I also recall spotting a few Rotomint type machines, that had the three round plastic wheels, all containing numbers one to six. I even remember seeing a Duo-Mat, but other than those, very little else German springs to mind, and at the time I had no idea that these slots came from Germany.

I know that German machines are popular with some collectors today. One of the German machines in my collection is called **Astra**, made in 1962 by Gunter-Wulff, Berlin. It has quite an attractive glass front, showing a circus clown looking through a large circle, with eighteen coloured dice around its perimeter. At the top of the cabinet are white and yellow squares displaying the numbers one to eighteen. Winning numbers in the white squares are 1-5 and 14-18, and the losing yellow numbers are 6-13.

On the insertion of a penny, the red arrow in the centre spins in a clockwise direction, stopping on a random dice number between 0 and 6. A second spin adds your two numbers together, then the third spin gives your final total score. Payouts range from 1d to 12d. The only way you can achieve the jackpot 12d win is to get a total of 2 after two spins, then your final third spin has to land on 0 (example, 0-2-0). On the other hand, any losing total still pays out two coins if the third spin results in 0.

Bottom right there is a stop button, which lights up during each of your three spins. However, when pressing this button, it doesn't appear to stop the arrow as it states. The actual game is all over pretty quickly. I have timed it, and the three spin cycle takes only fourteen seconds. It's a fun game to play, and I imagine this machine would have been popular back in the 1960s.

One night last year, I was having a nostalgic moment playing on all my electromechanical wall machines, when suddenly there was a loud bang. It sounded a bit like a pistol shot – it made me jump, I can tell you! I had no idea which machine it came from, but looking around, I noticed that the lights on my Astra had gone off. Then a burning smell filled the air and grey/black smoke could be seen coming from my Astra. I rushed to the mains socket and cut the power. As the smoke thinned, I opened up the machine and straight away spotted the section that had blown. What a mess!

Another one bites the dust I thought. Anyway, next day I paid a visit to my arcade owner friend, who I had purchased the machine from. I removed the burnt out section and took it along with me to show him. Luckily, he owned another non working Astra machine. "Take whatever you want from that one" he said, so I removed the desired part.



My next step was to enlist some help from a friend of mine who worked in the arcades back in the sixties. True to his word, he arrived the following morning, looked inside my machine, "Bit of a mess that" he said, "best thing I can do is take the machine and the spare part back home with me, then I will have a go at sorting it out."

Two weeks later, he returned "Got it going" he said. So I plugged it into the mains. Wait a minute, nothing lit up! Previously, when the machine was switched on, lights plus the previous player's total was displayed. We inserted a penny and the machine started up, ran through its cycle and paid out if a win was achieved. Then it automatically shut itself off. Very clever I thought, but I didn't really like the idea of my Astra looking as though it was switched off – I preferred the lights on in an attract mode. Luckily, if you press the red button at the bottom left of the cabinet, it lights all the bulbs plus displays the previous score. However, if this system is the only way to prevent the replaced section overheating again, then it's OK with me.

I do really like this machine, and I am so pleased to get it back in full working order. If you would like to see it in operation, a short video can be seen on Youtube. Just search *German wall machine 1962*. We were very lucky to actually film a 12d jackpot win (1-1-0), so it is well worth a quick look!

Robert Rowland

Editor's Note:

Two more of Robert's German electro-mechs. can be viewed on Youtube:

German wall machine, Rotomint Luxus 1957

3d wall machine Bingolett

Plus there are many other clips of British electro-mechs., allwins etc. – take a look.

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Chris 07909 962 186 (Berkshire)

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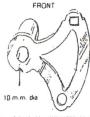




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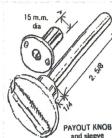
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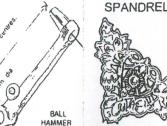
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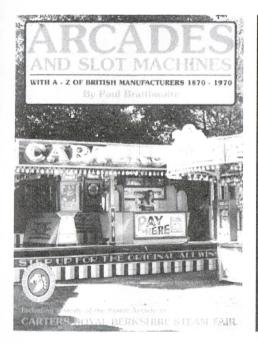
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